

ARIZONA CODE OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION
Part 7: Programs of the Administrative Office of the Courts
Chapter 2: Certification and Licensing
Section 7-203: Confidential Intermediary Program

A. Definitions. In this code section the following definitions apply:

Administrative director means the director of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Arizona Supreme Court, or the director's designee.

Administrative office means the Administrative Office of the Courts, Arizona Supreme Court.

Adoptee means an individual adopted pursuant to A.R.S. ' 8-102 and 8-132.

Adult means the same as provided by A.R.S. ' 8-101(1), that is: **Adult** means a person eighteen years of age or older.

Agency means the same as provided by A.R.S. ' 8-101(2), that is: **Agency** means a person other than the division licensed by the division to place children for adoption, including an attorney or law firm.

A.R.S. means the Arizona Revised Statutes.

Article means **Title 8, Article 1. General Provisions, Chapter 1** of the Arizona Revised Statutes.

Child means the same as provided by A.R.S. ' 8-101(4), that is: **Child** means any person under eighteen years of age.

Code section means the referenced provisions of the Arizona Code of Judicial Administration as adopted by the supreme court.

Confidential intermediary means a person who completes the requirements for certification as established by ' 7-201: General Requirements, this code section and A.R.S. ' 8-134 and who possesses a valid confidential intermediary certificate issued by the supreme court. A confidential intermediary is authorized to access and inspect sealed court and other confidential records for the purpose of locating parties pursuant to A.R.S. ' 8-134 to arrange a contact or share information between the individual who initiates a search and the person who is the subject of the search.

Division means the same as that provided by A.R.S. ' 8-101(7), that is: **Division** means the department of economic security.

AProgram coordinator@ means the staff appointed by the administrative director to administer the program.

AREvoked@ means a confidential intermediary certificate is permanently invalidated or canceled.

ASearch@ means the process where a confidential intermediary, upon the request of a birth parent, adoptive parent, adoptee or birth sibling of an adoptee, or upon a court order, reviews court and agency records to locate information regarding an adoptee, birth parent, adoptive parent or birth sibling of an adoptee.

ASection@ means the referenced provisions of the Arizona Revised Statutes.

ASuspended@ means a confidential intermediary certificate is not revoked, but the certificate holder is not permitted to exercise the privileges of the certificate for a set period of time as the result of a disciplinary action by the administrative director.

AValid@ means currently in effect, issued and signed by authorized staff of the Confidential Intermediary Program and not suspended or revoked.

- B. Applicability.** This code section governs the Confidential Intermediary Program, applies to every confidential intermediary in the state and is read in connection with ' 7-201: General Requirements. A.R.S. ' 8-134(J) provides:

A person shall not act as a confidential intermediary unless he possesses a confidential intermediary certificate issued by the supreme court. In order to be certified as a confidential intermediary a person shall meet and maintain the minimum standards prescribed by this section and the rules adopted by the supreme court.

- C. Purpose.** This code section is intended to result in the effective administration of the Confidential Intermediary Program and in certification of confidential intermediaries who perform their responsibilities in a professional and competent manner, abiding by all applicable statutes and code sections.

D. General Administration.

1. A.R.S. ' 8-134(I) provides that:

The Arizona Supreme Court shall administer the confidential intermediary program. The court shall adopt rules and procedures necessary to implement the program, including qualifications, required fees, minimum standards for certification, training and standards of conduct of confidential intermediaries, and shall establish the fees that may be charged by a confidential intermediary.

2. Role and Responsibilities of the Administrative Director. Reference '7-201: General Requirements. In addition, the administrative director shall appoint an advisory committee to meet no less than one time per year or as directed by the administrative director for the purpose of making recommendations on matters pertaining to the Confidential Intermediary Program. The administrative director shall develop guidelines for the appointment, terms of appointment of committee members and meeting requirements.
3. Role and Responsibilities of the Program Coordinator. The administrative director shall designate a Confidential Intermediary Program coordinator. In addition to the role and responsibilities specified in '7-201: General Requirements:
 - a. The program coordinator is responsible for administration of the Confidential Intermediary Program in compliance with Arizona law, Arizona Rules of Court, the Arizona Code of Judicial Administration and administrative orders adopted by the supreme court. The program coordinator may delegate any duties and responsibilities to staff.
 - b. The program coordinator shall maintain a list of confidential intermediaries, shall make the list available to the public upon request and post it to the judicial department Website. The minimum required certification list information for posting on the judicial department Website is the name of the certificate holder. The applicant may identify, on the applicant application or application addendum, additional information, including the address, telephone number and e-mail address of the certificate holder, for posting to the judicial department Website. The program coordinator may charge for the costs of providing copies of the certification list or any other public records of the program. The program coordinator shall not charge a confidential intermediary for a copy of the list.
4. Fund. The program coordinator shall deposit all collected fees in the Confidential Intermediary and Fiduciary Fund, in accordance with A.R.S. ' '8-135 (A), 12-284.03(8), 14-5651(A), and 36-342(B). A.R.S. ' 8-135(A) provides that: AThe supreme court shall administer the fund subject to legislative appropriation.@

E. Initial Certification.

1. Application for Initial Certification. Reference '7-201: General Requirements.
2. Qualifications for Initial Certification. An applicant for certification must meet the following criteria to qualify for application for certification:
 - a. 21 years of age or more;

- b. A citizen of the United States or legal resident;
 - c. Comply with all requirements for application for initial certification pursuant to ' 7-201: General Requirements;
 - d. Provide a full set of fingerprints, pursuant to ' 7-201: General Requirements and A.R.S. ' 8-134(K). A.R.S. ' 8-134(K) provides: ~~A~~In carrying out the provisions of this section the supreme court shall require applicants for a confidential intermediary certificate to furnish fingerprints and the supreme court shall obtain criminal history record information pursuant to section 41-1750@ The program coordinator shall submit completed applicant fingerprint cards to the Department of Public Safety (DPS). DPS shall exchange registration applicant fingerprint card information with the Federal Bureau of Investigations for national criminal history checks;
 - e. Pay all applicable fees outlined in the Confidential Intermediary Program Fee Schedule adopted by the supreme court;
 - f. Successfully complete the training requirements described in paragraph E(3) of this code section;
 - g. Pass the examination testing the knowledge of the applicant as a confidential intermediary as described in paragraph E(4) of this code section;
 - h. Agree to abide by the standards of conduct appended to this code section as adopted by the supreme court. Violations of the standards of conduct may be used as evidence of a violation of ' 7-201: General Requirements or this code section; and
 - i. Agree to comply with the Arizona Revised Statutes, Arizona Rules of Court, Arizona Code of Judicial Administration and administrative orders adopted by the supreme court governing confidential intermediaries and the laws of other states if applicable.
3. Training for Initial Certification.
- a. The program coordinator shall provide initial training for confidential intermediary applicants no less than one time per year. The training shall consist of a minimum of twelve hours of instruction. All new applicants shall attend the entire initial training session.
 - b. The program coordinator shall make the training available to persons not seeking certification upon application, payment of training fees, and class availability.
4. Examination.

- a. Each individual applicant for initial certification must personally take and pass, to the satisfaction of the administrative director, an examination, reasonably testing the knowledge of an applicant as a confidential intermediary. The program coordinator shall administer the examination no less than one time per year in conjunction with the training.

- (1) The administrative director shall establish and announce a passing grade on the examination prior to administration of the exam.

- (2) The program coordinator shall inform each applicant, in writing, of the grade of the completed examination and whether the grade is passing or failing.

- b. An applicant who fails an examination for certification pursuant to this code section is entitled to one reexamination. The applicant shall:

- (1) Submit a written reexamination request to the program coordinator within 30 days of receipt of the notice of a failing grade on the examination; and

- (2) Take the reexamination within 90 days of the original examination.

- (3) If the applicant fails the reexamination, the applicant shall not receive another examination. The applicant may retake the training and examination and pay the applicable fees the following year after failing the examination and subsequent reexamination.

5. Decision Regarding Certification. Reference ' 7-201: General Requirements.

6. Exemption from Certification. No certification is required of any agency licensed by the state or the Arizona Department of Economic Security pursuant to A.R.S. ' 8-126(1).

F. Role and Responsibilities of Certificate Holders. Reference ' 7-201: General Requirements. The following provisions also apply to confidential intermediaries:

1. Standards of Conduct. Each confidential intermediary shall adhere to the standards of conduct as appended to this code section and adopted by the supreme court, pursuant to this code section and A.R.S. ' 8-134(I).

2. Identification. When accessing files related to a search, a confidential intermediary shall provide the valid photo identification issued by the Confidential Intermediary Program with the request for appointment form identifying the individual as the confidential intermediary appointed to the case.

3. Parties. A confidential intermediary shall provide services only to those parties who are eligible pursuant to Arizona law.

- a. A.R.S. ' 8-134(A) provides that:

- A. Any of the following persons may use the services of a confidential intermediary who is listed with the court:
1. The adoptive parents of an adoptee who is at least eighteen years of age or, if the adoptive parents are deceased, the adoptee's guardian.
 2. An adoptee if the adoptee is twenty-one or more years of age.
 3. If an adoptee is deceased, the adoptee's spouse if the spouse is the legal parent or guardian of any child of the adoptee.
 4. If an adoptee is deceased, any progeny of the adoptee person who is twenty-one or more years of age.
 5. Either of the birth parents of an adoptee.
 6. If the birth parent of an adoptee is deceased, the parent of the birth parent.
 7. A biological sibling of the adoptee if the sibling is twenty-one or more years of age.

b. A.R.S. ' 8-134 (G) and (H) provides that:

- G. On receipt of a written statement from physician that explains in detail how a health condition may seriously affect the health of the adoptee or a direct descendant of the adoptee, the court shall order the confidential intermediary program to appoint a confidential intermediary. The confidential intermediary shall make a diligent effort to notify an adoptee who has attained eighteen years of age, and adoptive parent or guardian of an adoptee who has not attained eighteen years of age or a direct descendant of a deceased adopted that the nonidentifying information is available and shall be provided on written request.
- H. On receipt of a written statement from a physician that explains in detail why a serious health condition of the adoptee or a direct descendant of the adoptee should be communicated to the birth parent or biological sibling to enable the birth parent or biological sibling to make an informed medical decision, the court shall order the confidential intermediary program to appoint a confidential intermediary. The confidential intermediary shall make diligent effort to notify those individuals that the nonidentifying information is available and shall be provided on written request.

4. Sharing of Information. A.R.S. ' 8-134 provides that:

- C. . . . a confidential intermediary may inspect documents compiled pursuant to this article. Documents include the court records, division records, agency records and maternity home records. The confidential intermediary shall keep confidential all information obtained during the course of the investigation. The intermediary shall use confidential information only to arrange a contact or share information between the person who initiates the search and the person who is the subject of the search. A confidential intermediary shall review the court record before making any contact with an adoptee to determine if an affidavit has been filed pursuant to subsection E of this section. A confidential intermediary shall not contact persons under eighteen years of age.
- D. The confidential intermediary shall obtain written consent from the person who initiated the search and the person who is the subject of the search before arranging for the sharing of identifying information or a contract between them. If the confidential intermediary discovers the subject of the search is deceased or that the identity of the birth father was unknown to or not revealed by the birth mother, the confidential intermediary shall share this information with the person initiating the search. If the confidential intermediary, after a diligent effort, is unable to locate the subject of the search to obtain written consent to share information, the confidential intermediary shall share this information with the person initiating the search and prepare and place with the compiled documents a written report describing search efforts. If the person who initiated the search petitions the court to release identifying information, the court shall review the report prepared by the confidential intermediary and shall decide if the information may be released and in what manner the information may be released if the court determines there is good cause.
- E. An adoptive parent who has not informed an adoptee that the adoptee was adopted may file an affidavit so stating with the court where the adoption took place. The affidavit may be withdrawn at any time by adoptive parent. If an affidavit is a part of the court record, The confidential intermediary shall not make contact with the adoptee unless the adoptive parent withdraws the affidavit and grants permission in writing or the adoptee has filed an affidavit stating that the adoptee knows about the adoption and wishes to make contact with the birth parent.
- F. A birth parent who has not informed the parent=s biological offspring of the existence of the adoptee may file an affidavit so stating with the court where the adoption took place. The affidavit may be withdrawn at any time by the birth parent. If an affidavit is a part of the court record, the confidential intermediary

shall not make contact with the biological sibling unless the birth parent withdraws the affidavit and grants permission in writing or the biological sibling has filed an affidavit stating that the biological sibling knows about the adoptee and wishes to make contact with the adoptee.

G. Renewal of Certification. Reference ' 7-201: General Requirements.

1. Expiration Date. Certification expires every three years from October 31, 1999. A certificate holder is responsible for meeting all requirements for renewal as described in this code section and in ' 7-201: General Requirements prior to expiration of the certificate.
2. Training. All confidential intermediaries shall complete at least eighteen hours of approved continuing education every three years to meet the training requirements for renewal.
3. Notification of Decision. Reference ' 7-201: General Requirements.

H. Investigation and Disciplinary Action. Reference ' 7-201: General Requirements.

Adopted by Administrative Order 2001-12 effective January 11, 2001. Amended by Administrative Order 2003-15 effective January 23, 2003.

APPENDIX A
Confidential Intermediary Program
Standards of Conduct

Preamble. The following standards of conduct are hereby adopted by the Arizona Supreme Court to apply to all confidential intermediaries pursuant to A.R.S. ' 8-134(I). It is the purpose of the supreme court to provide these standards of conduct to establish minimum standards for performance by confidential intermediaries and to ensure confidentiality of the search and consent process.

Standard 1. Confidentiality. The confidential intermediary shall keep paramount in all actions the importance and significance of confidentiality. The confidential intermediary shall exercise extreme care and diligence in respecting the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved in the search.

- a. The confidential intermediary shall keep confidential all information obtained during the course of the search and shall use said confidential information only to arrange a contact or to share that information which is permitted by A.R.S. ' 8-134 between the person who initiated the search and the person who is the subject of the search.
- b. The confidential intermediary shall review the court records to determine whether an affidavit has been filed by a party consenting to or blocking contact and act according to the wishes expressed by such an affidavit.
- c. The confidential intermediary shall perform the responsibilities of the confidential intermediary pursuant to Arizona laws relating to adoption including limitations on the release of information.
- d. The confidential intermediary shall maintain required records in a professional manner while protecting the confidentiality of information contained in the records.
- e. The confidential intermediary, having located the sought-after party, shall divulge only that information necessary to allow the client and located party to make an informed decision whether or not to consent to the release of identifying information. In order to meet the requirements of informed consent, the confidential intermediary shall share only the information necessary for the physical safety and protection of the parties and their families. The confidential intermediary shall present such information in a nonjudgmental manner.
- f. On a case by case basis, the confidential intermediary may consult with a confidential intermediary sharing only that information on a case which is necessary for the specific purpose of soliciting ideas or information that would assist the confidential intermediary in carrying out the search to arrange a contact. The discharge summary shall clearly designate the consulting confidential intermediary. All confidentiality restrictions apply to both confidential intermediaries.

- g. The confidential intermediary may act as a mentor to assist an inexperienced confidential intermediary. The inexperienced confidential intermediary and the mentoring confidential intermediary may share confidential information for the purpose of instruction for the result of an increased skill level and a successful search. The request for appointment form and the discharge summary shall clearly designate the mentoring confidential intermediary. All confidentiality restrictions apply to both confidential intermediaries.

Standard 2. Skills and Knowledge. The confidential intermediary shall demonstrate adequate skills and knowledge to perform the work of a confidential intermediary and shall fulfill ongoing training requirements as specified by the program to maintain professional growth.

- a. The confidential intermediary has an obligation to have knowledge and keep informed of all current and applicable laws regarding adoption issues.
- b. The confidential intermediary shall inform the parties of the availability of resources for support.
- c. The confidential intermediary has a responsibility to maintain a working knowledge of documents and information customarily contained in court and agency files.
- d. The confidential intermediary shall possess the necessary verbal and written communication skills sufficient to perform the confidential intermediary role, including an aptitude for communicating in person, by telephone and by correspondence.
- e. The confidential intermediary shall manage each case proficiently. Skills required include, but are not limited to, skills necessary to perform the search, make contact, maintain records and discharge the case in a timely fashion.
- f. The confidential intermediary shall keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the search and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.
- g. The confidential intermediary shall prepare complete, accurate and understandable reports and discharge summaries.
- h. The confidential intermediary shall conduct each search demonstrating efforts appropriate to the case.
- i. The confidential intermediary shall perform a diligent and expedient search if the search is a court-ordered medical search.
- j. The confidential intermediary shall otherwise perform a search using proper diligence pursuant to agreement between the confidential intermediary and client.

Standard 3. Fees and Expenses. The confidential intermediary shall charge only those fees and expenses that are reasonable in amounts and necessarily incurred in order to conduct the search and provide services pursuant to Arizona law and administrative rules and administrative orders adopted by the supreme court.

- a. The confidential intermediary shall not charge more than the amounts permitted pursuant to the fee schedule adopted by the supreme court.
- b. The confidential intermediary shall return all fees collected in advance but not earned.

Standard 4. Sensitivity and Professionalism. The confidential intermediary shall exercise the highest degree of sensitivity and professionalism in all interactions with clients, the party located and others with whom they come in contact during the search. This includes the ability to empathize with others, be discreet in dealing with confidential information and recognize the emotions of adoption members.

- a. The confidential intermediary shall strive to develop professional objectivity regarding biases, attitudes and beliefs about adoption and reunion issues.
- b. The confidential intermediary shall demonstrate the ability to work with individuals regardless of differing culture, ethnicity or lifestyle.
- c. The confidential intermediary shall not remove adoption case records from agency or court files or falsify or alter records.
- d. The confidential intermediary shall not use materials or employ methods that are not consistent with the role of a confidential intermediary and shall not use materials or employ methods for personal benefit or in ways that conflict with the goals and role of a confidential intermediary.
- e. The confidential intermediary shall not assume the role of a therapist or counselor when acting in the capacity of a confidential intermediary, even if otherwise qualified to do so, but may provide initial education and information. A confidential intermediary should demonstrate understanding of how the confidential intermediary role differs from that of a counselor or an advocate.
- f. The confidential intermediary shall not provide or offer to provide legal advice in the role of a confidential intermediary.
- g. The confidential intermediary shall not violate any rules or policies regarding the Confidential Intermediary Program as established by the supreme court or conduct themselves in a manner that would reflect adversely on the judiciary, courts or other agencies involved in the administration of justice.

Standard 5. Ethics. The search and reunion of adopted individuals, adoptive parents and birth parents are highly charged emotionally. Because the primary sources of information about the unknown parties are confidential, the confidential intermediary is held to the highest standards of trust, impartiality and respect in the performance of services.

- a. The confidential intermediary shall perform services in a manner consistent with legal and ethical standards.
- b. The confidential intermediary shall not assume the role of an advocate or use coercion or undue influence to persuade any party to the search to take or not to take any action.
- c. The confidential intermediary shall be cognizant of personal limitations of knowledge and experience and may consult other experienced confidential intermediaries or the program staff about a case if the administrative rules and orders, Arizona statutes, standards of conduct or training manuals do not provide the guidance necessary to address difficult ethical issues. Nonetheless, the confidential intermediary is ultimately responsible for decisions made in regard to the case.
- d. The confidential intermediary shall avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.
 - (1) The confidential intermediary shall not accept appointment to a case or continue on a case involving a relative or business associate or a personal friend where the relationship is such that the relative or business associate or personal friend may exert undue pressure on the confidential intermediary.
 - (2) The confidential intermediary shall not accept an appointment or continue on any case where the confidential intermediary cannot act in an objective manner or perform services as required.
 - (3) The confidential intermediary shall not accept an appointment or serve as a confidential intermediary for the purpose of taking advantage of any party to the search for personal or professional gain.
- e. The confidential intermediary shall avoid misrepresenting the purposes of the Confidential Intermediary Program, the confidential intermediary's qualifications, fees or any other information relating to the role of the confidential intermediary. The confidential intermediary shall avoid misrepresenting to any client or any party located any circumstances or information specific to a case.
- f. The confidential intermediary shall avoid utilizing certification in any manner to gain access to information or services for purposes other than those of the Confidential Intermediary Program.

Standard 7. Compliance. The confidential intermediary shall perform all services and discharge all obligations in accordance with current Arizona and federal laws and the administrative rules and administrative orders adopted by the supreme court governing the certification of confidential intermediaries.

APPENDIX B
Confidential Intermediary Program
Certification Fee Schedule

Pursuant to A.R.S. ' 8-134(I), the Arizona Supreme Court shall administer the Confidential Intermediary Program. The court shall adopt rules and procedures necessary to implement the program, including qualifications, required and permissible fees.

A. Required Fees for Confidential Intermediary Certification

1. Individual Initial Certification Fees

a. Initial Certification

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| (1) For certification expiring <u>more</u> than one year after application date | \$ 100.00 |
| (2) For certification expiring <u>less</u> than one year after application date | \$ 50.00 |

b. Fingerprint Application Processing Fee
(Rate as set by Arizona law and subject to change)

c. Initial Training Session and Examination Fee \$ 150.00
(Includes one copy of the training manual and the examination and one reexamination, taken within 90 days, if applicable)

2. Individual Renewal Certification Fees

a. Renewal Certification Fee \$ 100.00

b. Renewal Training Session: \$ 75.00
(Includes one copy of the training materials)

3. Governmental Agency Initial Certification

(Applicable to all designated representatives and agency individuals seeking training or certification. The initial certification fee is waived, applicants are required to pay only the fee for the training and fingerprinting.)

a. Initial Training Session \$ 150.00
(Includes one copy of the training manual and examination and one reexamination, taken within 90 days, if applicable)

b. Fingerprint Application Processing Fee
(Rate as set by Arizona law and subject to change)

4. Governmental Agency Renewal Certification \$ 75.00
(Applicable to all designated representatives and agency individuals seeking renewal training or renewal of certification. The renewal certification fee is

waived, applicants are required to pay only the fee for the renewal training.)

- a. Renewal Training Session
(Includes one copy of the training materials)

B. Training Materials Available for Purchase Separately

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| 1. Initial Training Manual(s) | \$ 50.00 |
| 2. Renewal Training Manual(s) | \$ 25.00 |

APPENDIX C
Confidential Intermediary Program
Client Fee Schedule

Pursuant to A.R.S. ' 8-134(I), the Arizona Supreme Court shall administer the Confidential Intermediary Program. The court shall adopt rules and procedures necessary to implement the program, including required and permissible fees. A confidential intermediary may charge clients the fees listed in this appendix for adoption search related services.

A. Initial Appointment Fee. \$ 25.00

(This is a one time fee the confidential intermediary may charge and collect for services that result in a search appointment. Services are as follows: initial consultation related to services, processes and initial application with the Confidential Intermediary Program to establish the search appointment.)

B. Investigation/Research Hourly Rate. \$ 50.00

(Maximum rate allowable)

C. Bookkeeping/Travel Hourly Rate \$ 15.00

(Maximum rate allowable)

D. Direct Costs and Expenses Billable at Rates Incurred.

(Current State of Arizona mileage allowance as posted on the Arizona government's Website)